

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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R 170100Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6756

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1722

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US, SW

SUBJECT: VISIT BY SWEDISH AMBASSADOR

1. SWEDISH AMBASSADOR JEAN-CHRISTOPHE OBERG, RESIDENT IN BANGKOK, WHO HAS NOT YET PRESENTED HIS LETTERS OF CREDENCE IN VIENTIANE, CALLED ON ME JULY 16.

2. I REVIEWED OUR ROLE HERE AS A SMALL EMBASSY OF 27 AMERICANS INCLUDING ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, DATT, USIS AND MARINE GUARDS WITH NO ASSISTANCE OR OTHER OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONCERNED ESSENTIALLY WITH BILATERAL US/LAO RELATIONS. I RECALLED PRESIDENT'S HONOLULU STATEMENT ABOUT WANTING NORMAL RELATIONS WITH ALL INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES, LOOKING TO FUTURE RATHER THAN PAST AND EXPECTING THE HEALING EFFECTS OF TIME.

3. OBERG WAS INTERESTED IN:

A. SIGNS OF CHINESE/SOVIET RIVALRY;

B. GENUINNESS OF LAO DESIRE FOR RELATIONS WITH NON-COMMUNIST
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WORLD AND POSSIBLE ROLE FOR NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IN LAOS;

C. PROSPECTS FOR A SPECIAL ROLE FOR FRANCE IN LAOS.

4. I TOLD OBERG THAT:

A. LOCAL SOVIETS AND CHINESE MADE NO SECRET IN THEIR COMMENTS TO THIRD PARTIES HERE OF THEIR LOW REGARD FOR EACH OTHER'S COUNTRIES. IN MY OPINION WHILE SOVIET PRESENCE HERE WAS MORE VISIBLE THAN THAT OF CHINESE AT PRESENT, CHINESE PROXIMITY WAS A GEOPOLITICAL REALITY AND IN ANY EVENT THE PREDOMINANT FOREIGN INFLUENCE HERE AT PRESENT WAS CLEARLY VIETNAMESE.

B. I SAID THAT LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LPDR) TOLD US IT DESIRED ACCESS TO BOTH WORLDS AND DID NOT WANT TO BE FORCED TO DEAL ONLY WITH COMMUNIST WORLD. LPDR STRESSED THIS ANGLE PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO ITS DESIRE FOR TRADE ACCESS TO THAILAND. HOWEVER, THE AUTHENTICITY OF THIS LPDR CLAIM WOULD BECOME CLARIFIED AS LAO RELATIONS WITH NON-COMMUNIST AID DONORS DEVELOPED. JAPAN, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, AUSTRALIA AND POTENTIALLY FRANCE WERE CASES IN POINT.

C. WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS A SPECIAL ROLE IN LAOS FOR FRANCE WOULD ALSO BECOME CLARIFIED AS POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS FOR RESUMPTION OF FRENCH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE DEVELOPED AND FUTURE ROLE OF FRENCH TEACHERS AND DOCTORS BECAME APPARENT.
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